

# Washington State Patrol Media Release

**Chief Ronal W. Serpas**

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**For Immediate Release**

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## **“Crooks Don’t Ride Horses—They Drive Cars”**

The Washington State Patrol released its agency statistics today, comparing the recent twelve-month period (April 2002-March 2003) to the previous twelve-month period (April 2001-March 2002). The statistics show a dramatic increase in felony and misdemeanor warrants served as well as felony and misdemeanor drug arrests being made on our state highways from routine traffic stops, as well as continuing an increase in activity in the agency’s core mission areas.

“These numbers show that effective and lawful traffic stops, combined with good police work, are making a difference throughout our state,” Chief Ronal W. Serpas explained. “The WSP has long recognized the benefits of a strong, proactive traffic law enforcement philosophy, he added. “It is a fact that crooks don’t ride horses—they drive cars.”

Felony and misdemeanor warrants served over the last twelve months totaled 11,465, or 3,368 more arrests than in the previous twelve-month period. This reflects an over 40% increase. Felony and misdemeanor drug arrests as a result of routine traffic stops totaled 9,070 over the last twelve months on Washington highways, a 32% increase. That is 2,815 more arrests than the previous year.

“People who have these warrants have ignored the chances they have been provided by the court, and we are helping to hold these people accountable for their actions that many times have put our families, friends, and children at risk,” Chief Serpas explained.

Not only are traffic stops a proven method of providing a safer motoring environment, but they also serve as an effective means of crime control. “It will come as no surprise that large quantities of drugs are being transported on our roadways—even manufactured on our roadways,” Chief Serpas explained. “We are making major inroads into the problem as these numbers show, and we will continue to be proactive and vigilant,” Chief Serpas said. He added that those figures mean that there are about 56 arrests per day in just warrants and drug arrests on our highways.

In the State Patrol's core mission emphasis, speeders were stopped 259,236 times, a 57% increase over the previous twelve-month period. The Chief reported that DUI arrests totaled 19,659, a 37% increase; and seat belt violations were up 84%, from 42,944 to 79,128 this previous year. He said that the State Patrol averaged about 54 DUI arrests per day across our state.

In addition, total collisions reported to the State Patrol are down by 7%, or 826 less injured people. Fatality collisions on the interstate were down by 35%, or 28 fewer deaths than in the previous twelve months. The Chief reported, however, that there was an increase in collisions and fatalities on our state routes. "This data shows that we have much more work left to do, especially on our state routes," he noted.

"The evidence for aggressive enforcement is overwhelming," Chief Serpas said, "and I could not be prouder of our men and women of the Washington State Patrol for helping keep our citizens safe on our roadways."

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